DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 125 757 PS 008 651

TITLE	Sharing & Caring.
INSTITUTION	Children's Bureau (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	DHEW-OHD-76-30068
PUB DATE	76
NOTE	39p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402 (DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 76-30068)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Child Advocacy; *Childhood Needs; *Child Welfare; Costs; *Foster Children; Foster Homes; Health Services; Legislation; Social Responsibility; *Social Services; Student School Relationship; Volunteers

ABSTRACT

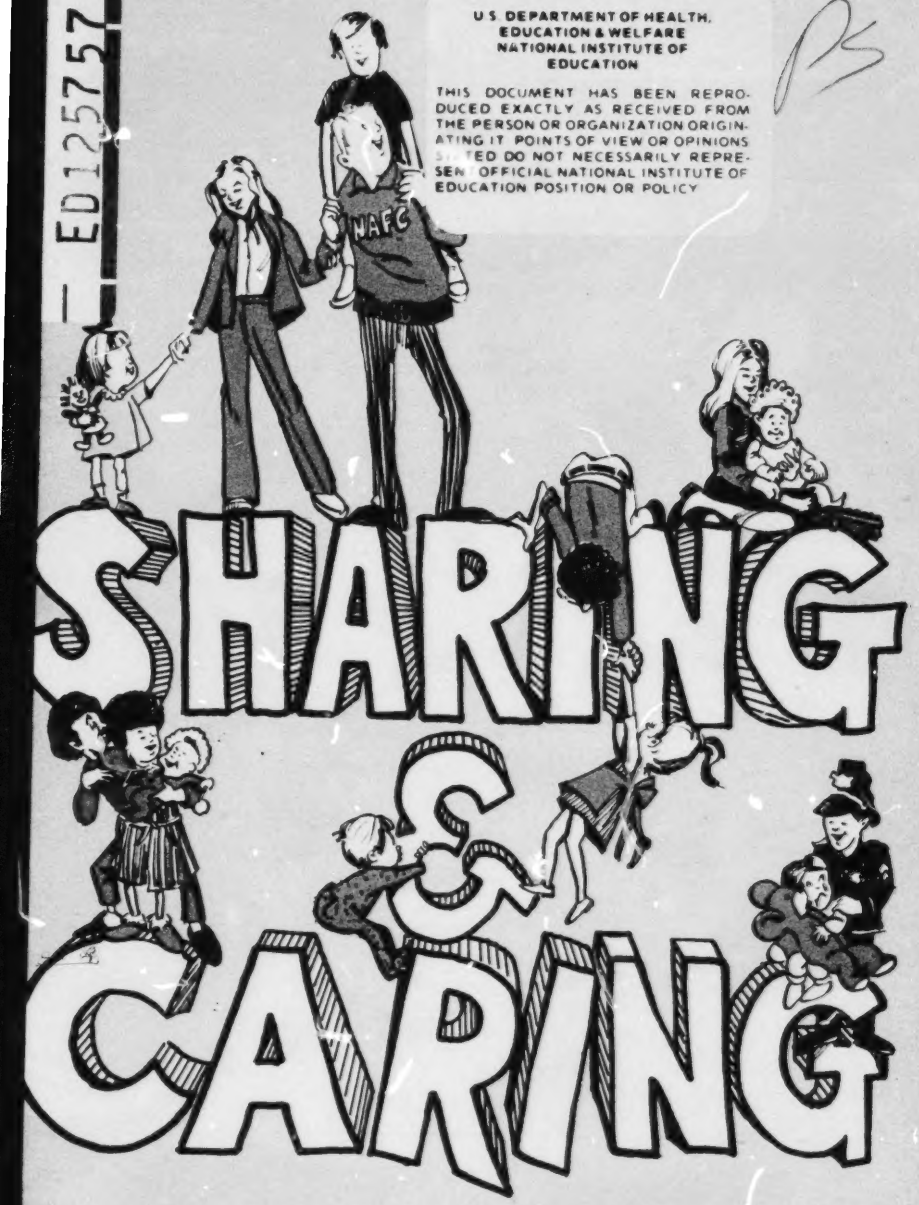
This booklet was prepared by the National Action for Foster Children Committee to disseminate information about the plight of foster children, what needs to be done to help them, and how individuals can help. An overview of the current foster care situation is presented followed by brief discussions of: (1) costs of foster care, (2) responsibilities delegated by law, (3) problems of foster care, (4) the need for more foster homes, (5) problems of providing health care for foster children, and (6) school problems. Suggestions are presented on a variety of things that individuals can do to help improve the foster care situation and some sources for further information are provided. (JMB)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED125757

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY



SHARING & CARING

PS 008651

Who cares what happens
to foster children?
There are, indeed, many
dedicated people including citizen
volunteers, foster parents and
social workers who stretch their time,
talents and the resources
that they have available to them.
But they are too few,
making do with too little.
The need for the third voice,
the citizen advocate, to join with
the social worker and foster parent in
supporting and in speaking out
on behalf of these children
is of crucial importance.

FOREWORD

Did you know that thousands of American children need your help? They come in all sizes -- from a few days old to 18 years. They come in all colors -- black, white, red, brown, yellow -- you name it. They've been neglected, abused, or become the innocent casualties of their parents' or other adults' accidents, illnesses, or other acts of commissions and omissions. They are no longer an integral part of their own natural families and must depend on others to provide the support and security so vital to a child's healthy growth. Their names and address: Foster Children, U.S.A.

Many people are vaguely aware that foster children do exist and assume that juvenile courts and institutions and foster homes are doing all that needs to be done. But that is not enough. These minor children are the wards of society, the responsibility and concern of all adult citizens. Whether they grow up to be responsible, constructive citizens or negative drains on society depends in large part on the quality of care they receive along the way to adulthood.

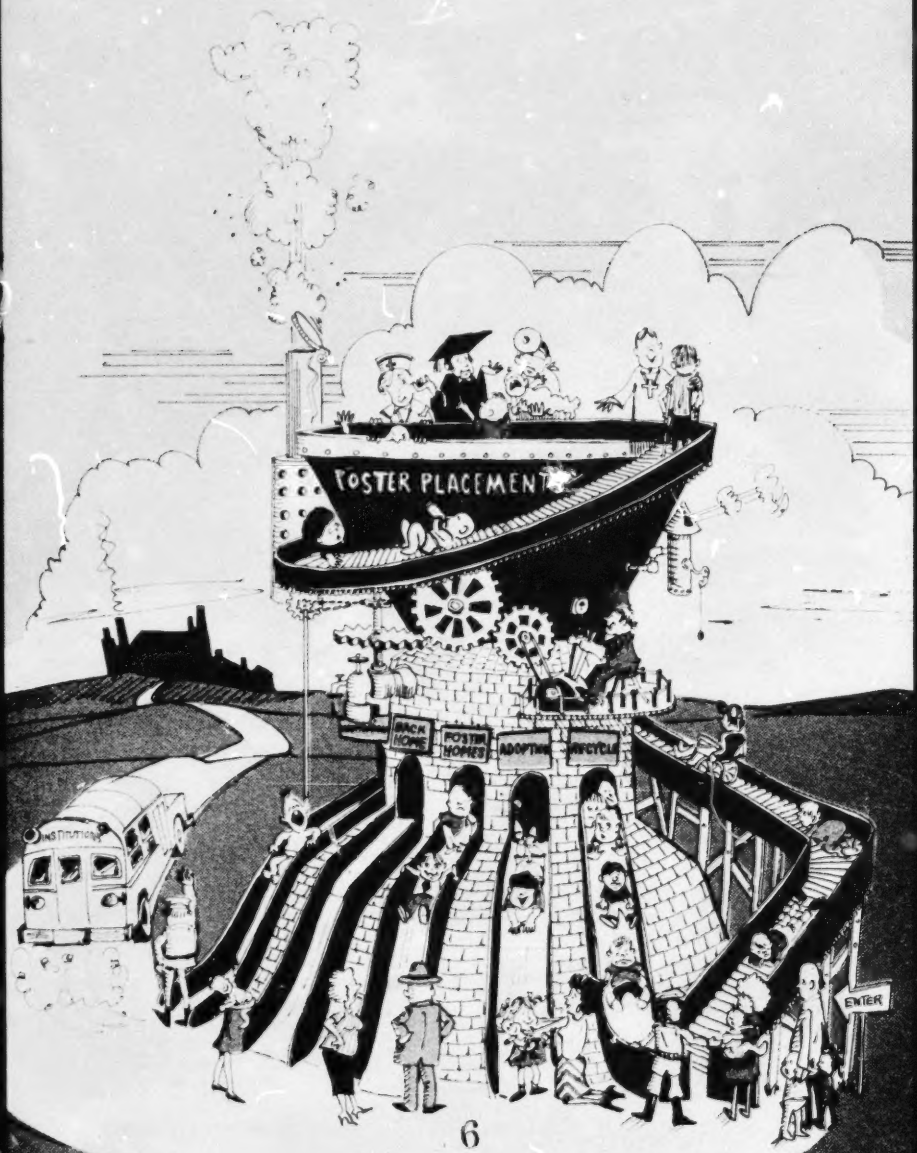
This is why in many communities throughout the nation ordinary citizens are becoming citizen advocates for foster children. Under the leadership of the Children's Bureau, Office of Child Development, which for more than 50 years has championed the causes and rights of dependent children in the nation, the National Action for Foster Children was formed. NAFC is a voluntary organization, which operates with the approval and technical assistance of the Children's Bureau, in the

DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 76 - 30068

Office of Child Development/Office of Human Development. The NAFC committee is composed of leaders in organizations which are concerned about children, about civic and social problems, or about the handicapped; all are involved in doing something to improve problem situations. Local Action for Foster Children Committees, also with the encouragement of the Children's Bureau, have been forming in various cities and towns. Already this grass-roots citizens' movement, which has been developing since 1972, has been doing things to improve the lot of foster family children at the local level, but there's room for more, much more improvement and expansion of efforts.

The purpose of this booklet is to tell you about foster children -- about their plight, about the responsibilities that society has assumed for them, about the problems of caring for them and why you are needed to help. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A FOSTER PARENT TO HELP A FOSTER CHILD, as the NAFC slogan says, and this booklet will show what some others are doing to help and will point the way toward what you can do in your community, in your State.

There are several other publications, referred to in this booklet, which may be helpful to you in determining standards of foster care, in becoming aware of the foster family children's problems in your community, and in doing something to alleviate the problems, such as forming an AFC committee. For publications which may be obtained from the Children's Bureau, write to Beatrice L. Garrett, Children's Bureau, Office of Child Development, P.O. Box 1182, Washington, D.C. 20013. The publication on Comprehensive Emergency Services may also be had by writing to the National Center for Comprehensive Emergency Services for Children in Crisis, 320 Metro Howard Building, 25 Middleton Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37210 (615) 747-4314.


FOSTER PLACEMENT
BACK HOME
FOSTER HOMES
ADOPTION
RECYCLE
INSTITUTION
ENTER

Six-month-old Jean was brought into the hospital emergency room, bleeding and barely able to breathe, with a rattle lodged in her throat. When she was making baby noises and fussing in her crib, it had disturbed her father -- studying for his Ph.D. -- and, so the parents said, he hit the rattle and it broke off in the baby's mouth. The last time she was brought to the emergency room -- four months before -- she had two broken legs after her father, so he explained, was holding the baby when a rug slipped from under him causing him to grab her legs to keep from dropping her on her head.

Robbie is an 8-year-old loner but not by choice. His unwed mother was unable to care for him and surrendered him for adoption after his birth but a congenital heart condition put this child in the hard-to-place classification, and so he was relegated to an institution. Eventually he was sent to a State school though he would in all probability respond to a home environment. He's quiet, neat, has a speech problem, sometimes trying to talk too fast and enjoys watching sports on television. "Wouldn't it be great," he said slowly one day, "to have some guy take a boy like me to a bowling alley?"

Betty's mother was jailed for drunkenness, then, when she became hysterical, was also booked on a charge of insanity. Fifteen-year-old Betty feared her mother was truly mad and that she herself might become the same way. With the help of the social worker who was the liaison between Betty and her foster parents, her natural mother and the social service agency, Betty began to develop more insight into her mother, who had had an unhappy, insecure childhood, and her current problems. As the social worker pointed out, when pressures mount up everyone has to have an outlet whether it's buying a new dress or playing ball or, like Betty's insecure mother, turning to alcohol. One day Betty expressed the thought that, if her mother as a child had had the love and understanding care that she

herself was receiving in her foster family, she would be a different person today. Betty was sure she was going to lead a better, happier, more constructive life than her mother had.

Jean, Robbie and Betty are all typical of the children – ranging in age from a few days to 18 years – who are placed in foster homes all over the country when they cannot be cared for in their own homes by their natural parents.

THE OVERVIEW

Children come into foster care either when the juvenile court decides that a child must be placed away from his or her parents, at least temporarily, or when the parents have asked for help because they cannot care for the child. In a small percentage of cases, the child has had difficulty with the law and may be considered delinquent. But most of the children are the victims of circumstances their parents cannot cope with, such as physical or mental illness, marital conflicts, alcoholism, drug addiction or retardation.

These children represent the same range of potential as other children. They are, or can become, attractive, lovable and assets to the community. Their average age is about 10 years. They become responsibilities of the community and then what happens to them? Too often parental neglect is replaced by community neglect – out of sight, out of mind, and let someone else bear the brunt of nurturing these unfortunate children.

Our children, it is often said, are our country's greatest resource -- the promise of the future – so let's examine how society is doing its job by these dependent children whose own family-home situations have failed them and who now must rely on strangers and the State to see them through.

Four out of every 1,000 children in the U.S. are foster children and some 350,000 of these are now in foster homes. Others now institutionalized, including many handicapped ones, would develop better in foster family homes if they had the opportunity.

Who cares what happens to foster children? There are, indeed, many dedicated people including citizen volunteers, foster parents and social workers who stretch their time, talents and the resources that they have available to them. But they are too few, making do with too little. The need for the third voice, the citizen advocate, to join with the social worker and foster parent in supporting and in speaking out on behalf of these children is of crucial importance.

These foster children constitute a sizeable number, of all races, religions and cultural heritages, yet in ways they are invisible and voiceless. Why? Because they're underprivileged, unorganized and under age -- too young to vote, which means too young to be heard where it counts and, as minors, to speak for themselves. Their rights are protected and pushed only as far as the adults who become their advocates are successful.

The classic 19th century study by Homer Folks, *The Case of Destitute, Neglected and Delinquent Children* -- vital reading for anyone interested in the history of child welfare in America -- clearly recognized that the country's destiny depended on the destiny of its children. Folks believed that all children possessed the potential for useful citizenship and that the more the country invested in time, money, energy and education on its children in need, the greater would be the returns from the investment. Folks' thinking was light years ahead of his time.

Today, society at least pays lip service to its respon-

bility for minors who are abused, neglected, or whose families cannot care for them, perhaps temporarily, often permanently. But beyond token words, do most citizens know how society's responsibilities -- *their* responsibilities -- are being met in regard to these children? Most people would be genuinely concerned, if the problems of these helpless children were called to their attention -- not swept swiftly aside.

Most people care what happens to children -- and Americans have a history of helping the underdog -- but it's easy to be bitten by the "Let-George-do-it" bug. Some don't care -- in fact, in a perverse way, some people seem to feel that foster children are tainted by the problems of their parents, whether alcoholism or welfare status, and should be grateful for whatever crumbs are tossed their way from an affluent society. One man, told that it cost more than $5,000 a year for a foster child to be cared for in a State institution, exclaimed: "I could send my son to Yale for that money but I can't afford it -- it's all I can do to send him to a State university and he has a part-time job."

The majority of these foster children are helpless pawns in a cruel situation, the children of parents who have been sucked under by defeating circumstances which they were unable to control constructively. Their children deserve a better break rather than be doomed and condemned to repeat the cycle of despair that, unchecked, can defeat another generation. The dark side of the picture is that neglected juveniles can create a jungle in the streets now and become a drag on society in their adult years. The bright side of the picture should appeal to the economy-minded as well as to those for whom the chief concern is the child's best interests. For most foster children, including the handicapped, the most effective care, both in cost effectiveness and in humanitarian terms, is foster family services.

But the problems of foster family care multiply with inflation and, in fact, some families can no longer afford to care for children for whom the reimbursement rates were never sufficient to cover costs, but whose affection and concern for children was considerably larger than their pocketbooks.

This booklet is intended for those who have a compassionate concern, not just for those less fortunate than themselves in general, but specifically for rudderless dependent children for whom society must step in and take on the responsibilities of the child's family. For only by looking at the entire picture and seeing the gaps between goals and performance can one learn what yet desperately needs to be done on behalf of these dependent children.

THE HIGH COST OF CARING

The cost of caring, in foster families as in natural families, is only one part of the complex foster family situation, and the amount of money that society invests constructively in these children now is far less -- even at its costliest ideal -- than the later price of perhaps maintaining people in juvenile detention homes, mental hospitals and jails.

The responsibility of aiding these children belongs to the entire adult population and should not fall just on the foster parents and the social worker who is the link with the social service agency. The potential of these minors ranges from outstandingly high to distressingly low, depending on how the particular child is nurtured. The encouraging note: most of these foster children, many of whom suffer physical handicaps, mental retardation, behavioral problems or traumatic hangups related to their backgrounds, respond well when good resources are brought into play on their behalf. One way that AFC committees can exercise a vital role is by encouraging various organizations in the community to help foster children in their own way.

RESPONSIBILITIES DELEGATED BY LAW

Just what are the responsibilities, delegated by law to the social service agencies, that society has assumed for these children we have described?

- First there is the responsibility to prevent the unnecessary placement of children outside their own homes when family crises occur and, when temporary placement is necessary, to aid and constructively support the natural parents in reestablishing their home on a better basis within a reasonable time.

- When it is necessary to place a child, there is the responsibility of placing the youngster with a good foster family suited to his individual needs and to return the child to his natural family, under improved conditions, within a reasonable time.

- When reestablishment of the home is not possible, there is the responsibility of trying legally to free the child for adoption, either by obtaining the parents' legal relinquishment or by obtaining the court's termination of parental rights. If this is not possible within a reasonable time, a written agreement should be drawn up so that the child will grow up in a suitable permanent foster home which will continue to be related to and supported by the social service agency.

PROBLEMS OF FOSTER CARE

How well are these responsibilities to foster children who are wards of the community being carried out? The answer can be summed up: not well enough with too few resources.

- First, too few States or communities are set up to meet family crises with emergency or protective services aimed at keeping children in their own homes rather than taking them out of their homes and placing them elsewhere either on a short- or long-term basis. One that has: Nashville, Tennessee, where a Comprehensive Emergency Services system copes with family problems 'round the clock will be discussed later.

- Secondly, social service agencies are understaffed mainly because of inadequate funds, in most areas, while excessive workloads do not allow time to work with the natural parents to help them reestablish their home, on a better basis, so that they can cope as parents and have their children returned home. Studies in four

States -- Massachusetts, California, Iowa and Arizona, made in 1972 and 1973 -- indicated that less than 30 percent of the foster children and the social service staff have meaningful contact with the natural parents. There is gross neglect of both the child's and his natural parents' rights and also of the needs for the child to maintain his familial roots -- no matter how warped they may be -- unless he has been permanently transplanted with new roots to take the place of the old ones. For without roots the child will become stunted emotionally, virtually crippled by emotional starvation.

This lack of contact with their children is often resented by the natural parents though they cannot carry out the responsibilities of caring for their children themselves. However most of them have been so beaten down and defeated in life they simply can't improve the situation. Unfortunately it is sometimes easier for both social service staff and foster parents to ignore the natural parents – usually with the well-meaning intention that it is best for the child, but actually in total disregard for their legal and moral responsibilities.

● Another drawback imposed by the excessing workloads is that there is not time to train others. This situation is usually compounded by a lack of money to employ more social workers and paraprofessionals or to recruit and train volunteers who might be able to assist in a number of ways, such as driving foster children to the doctors or to tutor a child who is behind in grade. Nor is there time to give special education sessions for foster parents who frequently need guidance and training in coping with the children's problems, deprivations, cultural heritages and emotional reactions which may be heightened or distorted because of traumatic backgrounds. Solutions to these two problems would be steps toward maintaining closer contact with the natural parents and being more aware of *their* problems, too.

THE NEED FOR MORE FOSTER HOMES

● Lack of time also severely hampers the staff from searching for and screening more prospective foster homes, which are desperately needed in most communities. Ideally, it should be possible to choose between one of several foster homes, picking the one best suited for that particular child when the need arises. In most cases it might be preferable to place a child in a foster home with an ethnic or cultural background similar to

his own. In practice, though, it's quite another thing and sometimes a social worker is fortunate to have even one foster home available in the community.

Children with handicaps are also usually hard to place and there's too little time to seek out those special people who will care for these children. Frankie was one of the lucky ones. Born a spastic into a home that already had more children than could be cared for adequately, Frankie was placed soon after his birth with foster parents who had cared for a dozen foster children, over a period of time, since their only grown son had established his home hundreds of miles away. Frankie's own family could not care for this handicapped child who would have to have operations in order for him to be able to walk, and who had suffered some brain damage as well. He was considered unadoptable. When his foster parents were told that Frankie was going to be placed in an institution his foster father said: "Over my dead body. We'll adopt him." And they did. Now a teenager, Frankie is one of the most loved young people in his community, where he earns his spending money caring for lawns and gardens of his neighbors' homes after school and on weekends.

- The most pressing reason for the lack of sufficient number of foster homes is lack of sufficient funds. Low reimbursement rates simply do not meet the costs of the child's care. There's a wide range in the amount allocated for foster family care across the nation, with reimbursement rates varying from approximately $900 to $3,000 per year per child (these figures do not include the administrative costs of the social service agency). By contrast, institutional care ranges approximately between $5,000 and $16,000 per year per child, depending on the type of institution and its location. So there is no doubt that, for the foster child for whom foster family care is best, foster family care is also the most economical for society.

There's also no doubt that most foster families have habitually dipped down into their own pockets not only to provide the little luxuries -- a movie, bowling game or a bicycle -- but also the essentials, for living costs far exceed the amount the family is usually reimbursed. Today with spiraling inflation, fewer compassionate people can afford to take on the cost of being a foster parent and some are dropping out though their concern for children remains keen. In Maryland, the number of foster families declined, in two years' time, by 216 from a former total of 4,427, according to the Maryland Department of Social Services. Since each home took care of between four and five children over several years' time this actually meant a loss of foster homes for about 1,000 children.

Foster parents come from every strata of society and it's not uncommon to find a college professor and wife whose children are grown, or who have one or two children, who have turned their home into a haven for foster children. But most often it's a blue collar family that simply cares about children but is limited in finances that has taken in "just-one-more" foster child, despite the strain it is to provide adequate clothing, entertainment, and little extras not covered by reimbursement rates in most States. The need for concerned citizens to act as volunteer advocates to help improve conditions for these disadvantaged, dependent foster family children is urgent.

PROBLEMS POSED BY HEALTH CARE

Obtaining proper health care for foster children is frequently a thorn in the side of foster parents and social service agencies, as well as the children. Despite the fact that Congress passed legislation more than seven years ago, stipulating under Medicaid that States

be required to set up a health screening and treatment program for poor children, 1975 figures showed that fewer than 3 million of the 13 million eligible had received this mandated health care. Even in the communities where Medicaid was operative it has often been difficult to get funds allocated for foster children's special needs. Medications not on the Medicaid list of prescriptions distributed to pharmacies, such as many drugs prescribed to relieve allergies, are often paid for by the foster parents. Prosthetic appliances of all kinds and special therapy, such as that required following a broken bone, may also pose economic stumbling blocks. Even the purchase of prescribed eyeglasses or hearing aids often is not included in the money provided for foster children's health care. Diabetics often have additional problems, regarding both diet and medications which are not adequately covered. The cost of dental care, especially when orthodontia is recommended, may not be covered.

In some areas it has been reported that doctors have refused to take foster children as Medicaid patients because of the red tape, paperwork and limited and delayed payments involved. In others where agencies must use clinics and hospitals instead of private doctors, the waiting time frequently runs into hours -- hours which neither a busy foster mother nor social worker has to spare.

Because foster children may sometimes move across State lines, there may not be a continuous medical record available for a foster child. He may receive medical care on an emergency basis, only when absolutely necessary. Or he may at best be given a superficial medical screening instead of a careful, detailed examination, followed up with counseling and advice to the foster parents and social worker by the physician concerning the child's long-range health needs.

There are many problems, some severe, related to providing good preventive and curative medical care for foster children. This is an important area in which citizen advocacy and other volunteer assistance can make a strong impact for constructive change.

SCHOOL PROBLEMS

School problems are common among all youngsters but for foster children they're frequently intensified. To begin with, about 40 percent of all foster family children have some sort of physical, mental or emotional problem. The percentage of foster children who require treatment for emotional disturbances exceeds the 10 percent of the general juvenile population requiring similar treatment, indicating that the traumatic experiences of most of these children have taken their toll. A bizarre case was 7-year-old Sally who had been molested

first by a babysitter when she was 2 and later, it was suspected, by the man who was living with her mother after her father had deserted the family. Sally was unable to get along with other children when she started school but she did excel in sports. It was more than a year after she was placed in an understanding foster family -- one that even provided a bike for her to ride -- and had established a trusting rapport with a therapist, before she really behaved like a normal child.

Most foster family children are behind in grade when they enter foster family care. Some have behavioral problems and have difficulty relating to their peers in school. Many a child could benefit from one-to-one tutoring -- an area in which volunteers would be welcomed -- either in subjects or, in the case of brain-damaged children, in skills.

But often a foster child's problems in school are more subtle, harder to pin down and cope with, and too many people in too many communities carry an ingrained, perhaps unconscious, prejudice against these children who may be suspicious, frightened, and frequently on the outside looking in. Mary, a 10-year-old foster child, was in the cafeteria line waiting for lunch, when the director called for all the children who were supposed to receive free lunches to step out of line because the cafeteria was running out of food. The humiliated children were eventually given a slice of pizza and a glass of milk, but the experience ripped open the scars in Mary, who remembers her own natural home where she was always hungry. Now Mary runs to be first in the cafeteria line and as soon as she gets home from school recites the day's lunch menu to her foster mother who says, "food represents security to all poor children."

Individual tutoring will reinforce not only reading and other skills but also the foster child's badly needed sense of self-worth. Separation from his natural

parents, to whom he is usually intensely loyal, would be shattering if it had been caused by natural deaths in the family. But the trauma is heightened for many children who come from homes torn by desertion, drugs, physical or mental illness, abuse and neglect. The foster child usually has a feeling of rejection that unfortunate experiences in school will intensify. The majority of foster children are in foster care through no fault of their own, yet there is often a stigma connected with them in the community which is reflected all too clearly in the schools.

Without a special effort being made to understand a foster child's problems and to be supportive of him, his feelings of incompetence and stupidity can easily turn into frustration and anger. Some of these children have had no discipline, others have been over-disciplined. All need a sense of direction. Teenagers need special guidance in job counseling and, when possible, in training in specific skills that will provide them with the tools to earn their own way as responsible adult citizens. If the cycle of despair, defeat, drifting, and the hopelessness that goes with it, which is prevalent in many of their natural parents, is to be broken in this generation, then these young people must be helped to enter the mainstream of society. Foster children are in a high risk population and therefore are frequently dismissed as lacking in potential. But the potential of all these children can be expanded, and guiding older juveniles into training in vocational skills or in applying for college scholarships and jobs is a vital area in which volunteer advocates can help immeasurably.

These are some of the problems, some simple, others difficult, which are faced by foster family children and which could, with a little help from adult advocate friends, be alleviated.

HOW FAR TO THE GOAL?

But how well are the objective goals, implicit in the responsibilities delegated by law to social service agencies, being carried out? The four studies in Massachusetts, California, Iowa and Arizona referred to earlier indicated that there's a long way to go. Here are some of the findings.

- Social service agencies are so understaffed and the workloads so heavy that direct service workers are totally occupied working with the child in the foster family, whom they are expected to serve well, and have little opportunity to work with the natural parents.

- Many children who are placed with a foster family could be maintained in their own homes if the protective and emergency services necessary were readily available.

- Less than 30 percent of the children and social service staff have meaningful contact with the natural parents.

- The average length of placement of a foster child in care on any one day is approximately five years, and the average foster child's age is about 10 years old.

- From 50 percent to 85 percent of the children in foster family care on any one day will probably continue to grow up in a foster family.

- A study in one State showed that 67 percent of foster children in care on one day had been in placement between four and eight years; 83 percent had never been returned to their natural home even for trial periods.

- Less than 10 percent of the children in foster family care over one year are being freed and placed for adoption.

- Few States have a definite plan for permanent foster family care though over one-half of foster children continue in unplanned long-term care. Many children would benefit by permanent foster care status. These include children who would not be readily adoptable because of some handicap, older children, and those who have lived in a foster home long enough -- one or more years, usually -- to identify with it and to regard the family as their own, providing them with a much-needed sense of security that would be broken if they were transferred to another family for adoption. Subsidized adoption will meet the needs of many of the children.

- One study showed that the average number of moves from one foster home to another was 2.7 per child, with one quarter of the children moving three or more times.

- There are not enough qualified foster families to meet the specialized needs of foster children, and education for foster parents, to help them cope with today's problems, is almost totally lacking.

- Although the most economical way to care for foster children is in foster families, and for most foster children family life is preferable to that in institutions, the foster family service system is grossly underfinanced throughout the country. Spending more money to upgrade foster family services now is not only an investment in the future of the children, and of the country, but also saves dollars in terms of cost effectiveness.

If the situation looks bleak, look again -- at what concerned citizens from all walks of life have been doing. They're accomplishing things most effectively by forming an Action for Foster Children committee in the community, with the endorsement and support of the National Action for Foster Children committee and the Children's Bureau. People who care, who want to act as compassionate advocates for foster children even though they are not foster parents, have been joining with social workers, educators, public officials and foster parents to review the problems and seek solutions. Here's what some communities, local committees and individuals have been doing, and how they recommend that others can become doers, too.

● Charles Goodall is a busy oil and electronics industry executive in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who finds time, all year long, to work actively for the rights of all children, especially foster children, as chairman of the Tulsa County AFC committee and, before that, as one of the organizers of the Child Welfare Advisory Board of Tulsa County. Under his leadership the AFC committee successfully petitioned the Oklahoma State Health and Welfare Department for an increase in reimbursement rates paid to foster parents, then worked out ways to improve methods of providing clothing for foster children by combining efforts with the Tulsa County Foster Parents Association and the Oklahoma Public Welfare Commission. He received the 1975 NAFC national award for outstanding advocacy on behalf of foster children which he accepted during National Action for Foster Children Week. Mr. Goodall warned that one week a year was not enough, that every AFC committee needs a project for the full year. His recommendations on how to find motivated people to form an AFC committee in a community are worth noting: start with a nucleus of two or three people prominent in the com-

munity and spread out. "Make it the IN thing," said Goodall. "You need people who have to deal with everyone from the Governor and head of the health and welfare department on down. Some people are window dressing -- they attract others, and community interest -- and others are workers. It takes all kinds -- and we need them all."

● Grace Goddard is a *Buffalo Courier-Express* reporter who singlehandedly has waged a public education campaign through her news and feature stories about foster care that have been published in the largest newspaper in New York State outside New York City. Through one of her columns, devoted to giving an in-depth profile of a hard-to-place foster child, presenting the child's problems as well as appealing characteristics, she has managed to find dozens of foster homes for youngsters. Mrs. Goddard's interests have included her personal, as well as professional, involvement with foster parent groups and social workers. Her compassionate concern for children without homes is reflected in the favorable image of foster family children which she has helped create in New York State.

● In Maryland, Baltimore advertising executive Virginia Zeller found herself drafted to serve as chairman of the Maryland Action for Foster Children, the statewide committee of citizens dedicated to upgrading services for foster children and their families. Not only was she the organizer of the committee but also one of the leading demonstrators carrying signs in front of the Governor's campaign headquarters advocating an increase in the reimbursement rates to foster parents.

"Our charge from the Advisory Committee on Foster Care directed us to undertake at least one project during our first year in operation. We chose a legislative project," Mrs. Zeller explained. She considers

community education is also of vital continuing importance "because I felt sure most people did not know any more than I had known about the needs and problems of foster children," said Mrs. Zeller, who has brought all of her advertising and public relations experience to the cause of foster family children. "The program calls for the help of all kinds of people in the community: people with political clout, people with ideas and talents, people who can lead, people who are willing to follow and do the hard work," she said.

● In Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma professor Dr. Leon Leonard and his wife not only have two children of their own, they also have a pair of foster children – a blind, brain-damaged girl and an emotionally disturbed boy – who moved from Washington to Oklahoma with the Leonard family. Dr. Leonard has also set up a short-term foster care program for adolescents who have been brought to the attention of the juvenile court, often because of conflicts with their own families. Dr. Leonard recruits, organizes and supervises the foster parents who, like himself, are volunteers who take these adolescents – some have run away from home, others may have been arrested – into their homes for about one to four weeks with the sanction of the juvenile court. The program is called Juvenile Services Inc., of Cleveland County and has more than 40 volunteer foster homes involved.

COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY SERVICES

● In Nashville, Tennessee, Comprehensive Emergency Services (CES) have been set up, designed to care for children in crisis at any hour of the day or night. The core of the system is based on a 24-hour emergency intake telephone answering service so that by phoning one number the call will be screened and then handled by the service best suited to help, as determined by the

qualified caseworker on duty. CES not only relieves the police of carrying the burden of responsibility of children in crisis -- formerly the only place to call in an emergency, which set into motion the legal system -- but also reduces the number of children formerly removed from their homes precipitously, often in the middle of the night, to institutional shelter care. Few communities are adequately prepared to provide immediate emergency services for children found alone and unfed in their home, or being abused by a parent or babysitter, or caught up in a family crisis such as when a parent is hospitalized or suddenly jailed. CES consists of well-coordinated components that include the following:

- *emergency caretakers* who can be called by the intake worker into a child's home for a few hours when it is suddenly without supervision, such as when the parent is hospitalized or jailed;

- *emergency homemakers* who may be assigned to provide services in a home throughout the emergency situation, which may mean maintaining the children in their own home for several weeks;

- *emergency foster family homes* which provide temporary care for no more than one month for children who cannot be maintained in their own homes;

- *emergency shelter for adolescents* who are brought to the attention of CES because of neglect, abuse, or a crisis in their home and do not need to be held in juvenile detention, which would occur if no other facilities were available;

- *emergency shelter for families* so that an entire family can be accommodated without separating the children;

- *outreach and follow through* of emergency situations by a qualified social worker who works toward a solution of the problem.

CES is, of course, plugged into all of the facilities of the State and local governments, including police and juvenile courts, hospitals and medical facilities, and public social agencies, which would immediately be called into action if necessary by the caseworker on duty.

The National Center for Comprehensive Emergency Services to Children in Crisis, located in Nashville,

Tennessee, draws upon the successful experience of Metropolitan Nashville Davidson County's Emergency Services System to provide other States and localities with technical assistance in developing programs for their own communities and has prepared a booklet describing the pilot program in detail. The booklet may be obtained free by writing to the National Center or to the Children's Bureau.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A FOSTER PARENT TO HELP A FOSTER CHILD

Now that you're aware of the plight of foster children and the need for adult citizens to tackle the problems involved with providing proper care for foster family children, how can you be a part of the action? Here's how you can help.

- First, find out if there is an AFC committee in your community or nearby and join up with it. Then you can apply any of the following suggestions which may be pertinent to your area's foster family children's needs.

- Form an Action for Foster Children committee in your town if there is not one in a neighboring community with which you can join forces. Write for free literature and technical assistance from the National Action for Foster Children committee, care of the Children's Bureau. Get in touch with the director of the social service agency that is handling foster children placement in your area and determine what other staff and agency board members who are acquainted with community problems should be on the AFC committee. Then call two or three community leaders and ask them to be founding advocates for foster children on the AFC committee, even though their time may be limited, and

emphasize that their interest will attract others. Use a gimmick, such as a bumper sticker reading "FFV -- Foster Family Volunteer." Then, with the help of the founding members, a nucleus of two or three volunteers, recruit representatives of different professions.

An ideal AFC committee might consist of some of the following: a pediatrician, a judge or former judge, a lawyer, media representatives such as a TV executive, newspaper editor or columnist, a foster parent, a uni-

versity professor especially when there are possibilities of developing a group of tutors, a faculty member of a school for special handicaps, clergymen and representatives of church groups such as the Methodist Board of Child Care and Catholic Charities, a union representative and a bank president, leaders of industry and cultural organizations such as a museum or symphony, representatives of ethnic groups, the Parent Teachers Association, leaders of civic groups and service clubs such as Rotary and Kiwanis, the League of Women Voters, the Junior Chamber of Commerce and other organizations represented on the NAFC committee. Among those who should be instrumental in joining with the volunteers in organizing an AFC committee are the staff of social service agencies involved with foster children.

- Get the facts about the foster family services and the situation in your community – find out what is, and is not, being done for foster children. Perhaps one group, such as the JayCees or the League of Women Voters, will take on the responsibility of making a survey of conditions in your city and State with the professional assistance of social service staff who may also provide the secretarial help in compiling the report. Then the entire committee can review the problems and seek solutions that are best for your area. Begin by asking some crucial questions such as the following:

- How many foster children are there in the community?

- How are they being cared for?

- Are the foster homes overcrowded?

- Are there enough foster family homes?

- Are foster children receiving good medical care, including the eyeglasses, orthodontia, and extra medications that may be needed?

- Are social service workloads too high to permit adequate personal attention to improving the home situation of the natural parents?

- What changes are needed?

- Are reimbursement rates to foster parents adequate in proportion to ever-increasing inflationary expenses?

- How long has it been since the reimbursement rate was increased?

- Before mobilizing the community for action, first sound the gong for attention. One way of doing this is by setting up a ceremony with the Mayor or Governor to ratify the "Bill of Rights for Foster Children" which was adopted by the National Action for Foster Children in historic Congress Hall in Philadelphia on April 28, 1973. Since then many States and cities have ratified this important document as seen on the following page.

Handsome copies of the Bill of Rights for Foster Children, suitable for framing, are available from the Children's Bureau.

- As an aide in studying and judging the services offered in your community, write for a free copy of *Standards for Foster Family Services Systems with guidelines for implementation specifically related to public agencies.* It's to be had for the asking from the Children's Bureau.

- With the "Community Self Evaluation Chart,"

Bill of Rights for Foster Children

Ratified in Congress Hall, Philadelphia

Saturday, the Twenty-eighth of April, Nineteen hundred and seventy three

EVEN more than for other children, society has a responsibility along with parents for the well-being of foster children. Everyone are responsible for acting to insure their welfare.

EVERY foster child is endowed with the rights inherently belonging to all children. In addition, because of the temporary or permanent separation from and loss of parents and other family members, the foster child requires special safeguards, resources, and care.

EVERY FOSTER CHILD HAS THE INHERENT RIGHT:

Article the first ..... to be cherished by a family of his own, either his family helped by readily available services and supports to reassume his care, or an adoptive family or by plan, a continuing foster family.

Article the second ..... to be nurtured by foster parents who have been selected to meet his individual needs and who are provided services and supports, including specialized education, so that they can grow in their ability to enable the child to reach his potential.

Article the third ..... to receive sensitive, continuing help in understanding and accepting the reasons for his own family's inability to take care of him, and in developing confidence in his own self-worth.

Article the fourth ..... to receive continuing loving care and respect as a unique human being ..... a child growing in trust in himself and others.

Article the fifth ..... to grow up in freedom and dignity in a neighborhood of people who accept him with understanding, respect and friendship.

Article the sixth ..... to receive help in overcoming deprivation or whatever distortion in his emotional, physical, intellectual, social and spiritual growth may have resulted from his early experiences.

Article the seventh ..... to receive education, training, and career guidance to prepare him for a useful and satisfying life.

Article the eighth ..... to receive preparation for citizenship and parenthood through interaction with foster parents and other adults who are consistent role models.

Article the ninth ..... to be represented by an attorney at law in administrative or judicial proceedings with access to fair hearings and court review of decisions, so that his best interests are safeguarded.

Article the tenth ..... to receive a high quality of child welfare services, including involvement of the natural parents and his own involvement in major decisions that affect his life.

ATTEST:

Bruce H. Wallace
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH COMMITTEE

Mrs. James M. (Maria) Cox
MEMBER, NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH COMMITTEE

Frederick A. Brown, Jr.
ASSOCIATE CHIEF, CHILDREN'S BUREAU

(available from the Children's Bureau) issued by NAFC based on the Bill of Rights for Foster Children, see how your community stacks up.

- Set up one or more sub-committees, headed by AFC committee members, to handle specific areas of community relations such as:

- media -- an ongoing community education to heighten community awareness of foster family children's needs and to help break down the prejudice and stigma too often prevalent in a community.

- tutorial program -- recruit and supervise tutors to work with children who need special kinds of help, either in schooling or in skills.

- career counseling and vocational guidance -- designed to help teenagers make a plan for their future.

- scholarship fund -- a benefit might be held to provide a scholarship a year for advanced educational in secretarial, or vocational, training or in a college, or perhaps the money might be earmarked for a particular ambition, such as training to become a teacher or social worker.

- legal help and advisors -- recruit a group of attorneys who will volunteer to represent foster children in legal matters. Advanced law students might also take on a research project concerning the problems and rights of children.

- "FFV" (Foster Family Volunteer) program -- to establish individual friendships with selected foster children throughout the year. These

friends may also help maintain closer contacts with natural parents, under the social worker's supervision, such as by driving a child to visit his natural parents.

- legislative action -- this committee could concentrate on determining what legislation to promote that would help improve foster family care in your State or community.

- In some communities AFC might concentrate on setting up Comprehensive Emergency Services, with a commercial telephone answering service and rotating qualified case workers on call, so that a 24-hour intake system will be coordinated to offer the most options, in case of emergencies, with the least possible disruption for the child.

- Another AFC committee might decide on a legislative project, such as lobbying for adequate reimbursement rates for the children's maintenance, or for State-guaranteed and paid liability insurance which will cover both foster child and foster parents when a foster child is involved in damage to property or persons.

- An important area in which AFC committees could make their interests known to their legislators and Governor is the State plan of social services required by Title XX of the Social Security Act, effective October 1, 1975, and each year thereafter under which foster family services are not mandated as part of the federal-State social services program. AFC committees should familiarize themselves with the provisions of Title XX so that they can promote a strong program in their State insuring that services for children in foster care, health support services, and protective services for children will receive adequate funding. Citizen advocates can look to this revenue-sharing in social services as a

source of possible additional funds for foster family children, with the State providing 25 percent of the funds while the Federal Government provides the additional 75 percent.

- During Action for Foster Children Week in May of each year, make a detailed report part of the community education, highlighting what has been accomplished and outlining the immediate goals for the coming year.

FOSTER CHILDREN NEED YOUR HELP

The need for citizen advocates for foster family children has never been more acute. How these children are treated by their communities which provide care for them when their own natural families break down will determine how they will behave as adults tomorrow -- whether they will be responsible citizens or the flotsam and jetsam of an affluent society. One think is certain -- the problem isn't going to go away. Minor children who need help will be here, even though they may be all but invisible and voiceless in an adult's world.

In the 18th century, Charles Thomson was cared for by a foster parent after his widower father died before the ship bringing the immigrant family to the new world docked in Delaware. With the help of his foster mother, whose name is lost in history, Thomson received a fine education and became a scholar who first translated the Septuagint Bible from Greek to English, a language teacher and a successful merchant. He was one of the colonial citizens who joined together in both the First and Second Continental Congresses for which he served as Secretary. When at last in 1789 the new nation, the United States of America, convened its first Congress under the Constitution, it was Thomson who was selected for the honor of taking the official news to the

man who was unanimously elected first President of the United States, George Washington, at his Mount Vernon estate in Virginia.

Two centuries later the same tradition of fine former foster children could not be better exemplified than by a solid citizen of Englishtown, New Jersey, Violet Kraszewski, who spent 15 years as a foster child, the last ten in one foster home. Mrs. Kraszewski now has seven children of her own but "finds" spare time to help foster children in countless ways from entertaining them on picnics to founding the Former Foster Children's Organization of New Jersey.

At first acting as a "big sister" to foster children, Mrs. Kraszewski became acutely aware of the need for community education and recognized the effectiveness of serving as a "model" former foster child-now-woman of achievement to the public as well as to foster children. She's set up workshops and conferences, spoken before foster parents, foster children, social workers, community colleges, civic groups and "buttonholed people in neighborhood shopping centers," she says, to get across her message about "sharing and caring" for foster children.

"When I was a child I was hurt so many times that I said, more than once, I was never going to let myself love, and care, and be hurt ever again," she says. But the care and love she received in the foster home that was her own for 10 years changed her life.

"Sharing -- and caring is the answer," she says, "and we *must* share -- and care -- about foster children."

And sharing and caring is what National Action for Foster Children is all about.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Office of Human Development • Office of Child Development
Children's Bureau 1976 • DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 76 - 30068

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402